

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
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O 171419Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4360
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EG IS US
SUBJECT: PRESS DOWNBEAT ON POLITICAL COMMITTEE

REF: CAIRO 01733

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SUMMARY. MEDIA GIVES GLOOMY TREATMENT TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE OPENING AND HAS LIMITED HOPES FOR SUCCESS. REHASHES FLAP OVER AGENDA WHICH "SETTLED BY U.S. PROPOSAL IN SUPPORT OF EGYPT". ISRAELI STATEMENTS ALLOWED-SUGGEST FRICTION WITH U.S. WHILE COMMENTARY CALLS ON ISRAEL TO CHOOSE BETWEEN PEACE AND LAND. END SUMMARY.

1. NO SIGNS OF OPTIMISM. AHRAH HEADLINE TYPICAL:

"COMMITTEE FACES DIFFICULTIES WHICH LIMIT HOPE FOR SUCCESS". EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL SOURCE QUOTED THAT AGENDA HAD BEEN CENTER OF TWENTY-FOUR HOUR CRISIS WHICH HAD THREATENED PREVENT CONVENING BECAUSE EGYPT OBJECTED TO MANNER IN WHICH ISRAELIS WISHED TREAT WEST BANK AND GAZA. NOTED ISRAEL HAD INSISTED INCLUDING QUESTION OF "PALESTINIAN ARABS" WHILE EGYPT HELD FIRM ON DISCUSSION OF "PROBLEM OF WEST BANK AND GAZA". OUTCOME HAILED AS EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATIC VICTORY. SPOKESMAN QUOTED THAT AGENDA CRISIS SETTLED WHEN U.S. ADVANCED PROPOSAL SUPPORTING EGYPTIAN STAND.

2. AGENDA. LATEST AGENDA IN PRESS ATTRIBUTED TO STATEMENT BY DAYAN. SAID TO INCLUDE (A) DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR NEGOTIATION OF COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT; (B) WEST BANK AND GAZA; AND (C) ELEMENTS OF PEACE TREATY IN CONSONANCE WITH RESOLUTION 242.

3. COMMENTARY. EDITORIALS, REFLECTING CONTINUING PREOCCUPATION WITH SETTLEMENTS, ARGUE THAT "OLD ISRAELI MENTALITY" UNCHANGED AND ISRAELI LEADERSHIP MUST MAKE CHOICE BETWEEN PEACE AND LAND. AKHBAR THOUGHT THAT NEXT DAYS WOULD BE DECISIVE. ISRAELI LEADERSHIP COULD REALIZE HOPES OF PEOPLES OF AREA AND WHOLE WORLD IF IT ABANDONED ITS OLD HABITS OF THOUGHT. U.S. ROLE IN THIS REGARD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"COULD BE EFFECTIVE".

4. MILITARY COMMITTEE. WEIZMAN, ACCORDING PRESS, WILL ARRIVE CAIRO JANUARY 19 TO RESUME DELIBERATIONS BY MILITARY COMMITTEE. ISRAELI MILITARY SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED DECISION RESUME CAIRO TALKS TO PARALLEL WORK OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE.

5. U.S.-ISRAEL. PRESS ALSO SOUGHT POINT OUT FRICTIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND ISRAEL. ISRAELI OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN SAID U.S. HAD PLAYED ACTIVE ROLE IN SETTTLING EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES OVER AGENDA. "U.S. SUPPORTED SADAT INITIATIVE . . . DIFFERENCES BETWEEN U.S. AND ISRAEL ON SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINIAN QUESTION."

6. COMMENT. PRESENT SITUATION DEFYING ABILITY OF GENUINELY DISPIRITED EGYPTIANS TO FIND BRIGHT SIDE. "VICTORY" OVER AGENDA NO DOUBT SEEMS SMALL POTATOES AFTER JERUSALEM TO EGYPTIANS AND GOING PROMISES BE EVEN ROUGHER WHEN SUBSTANCE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY. THERE IS NOW DANGER THAT EGYPTIAN MOOD, REFLECTED AT NSC MEETING, WILL AFFECT THEIR NEGOTIATING ABILITY. DEEPLY SUS-

PICIOUS, EGYPTIANS WILL NEED TANGIBLE EVIDENCE EARLY ON
THAT THEY NOT ENGAGED IN THE "ENDLESS NEGOTIATIONS" THAT
THEY HAVE LONG FEARED. EILTS

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